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ABSTRACT

In September 1981, the Educational Foundation, Inc., at New River Community College (NRCC) initiated a charter member fund drive. By October 1982, the Foundation received $100,000 in gifts and pledges, $130,000 in liquid assets, and $300,000 in gifts other than cash. Among the reasons for the success of the drive was the training received by the Executive Director of the Foundation at a Council for the Advancement and Support of Education conference. Steps taken during the 1981-82 year to raise funds included the following: (1) forming a Faculty-Staff Foundation Advisory Board, which solicited financial support from staff, with 70% of all faculty making gift commitments; (2) initiating a Building Bridges campaign to raise campus visibility within the community: (3) developing a list of potential donors; (4) inviting industry leaders to college breakfasts, during which presentations stressed the contributions of NRCC to local business; (5) arranging speeches by the Foundation Director to local groups; (6) soliciting letters of endorsement from community leaders; (7) sponsoring luncheons for influential community women; (8) conducting one-on-one visits to potential donors by the college president; (9) kicking-off the fund drive with a wine and cheese party; and (10) holding a year-end celebration honoring charter members. (LAL)

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NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

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NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

The Educational Foundation, Inc., at New River Community College, located in rural Southwest Virginia, initiated a Charter Member Fund Drive in September 1981, for the purpose of raising $100,000 in gifts and pledges for the promotion of excellence at the college. By May, eight months after the kick-off of the drive, the Foundation had raised the $100,000 primarily in $1,000 gifts from citizens in an area in Appalachia where unemployment was as high as 21% during that eight-month period. By September more than $385,000 was on the books.

This effort was the initial fund-raising campaign for the Foundation and was successful for a number of reasons. Among those reasons was sound training and service given by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education to the Executive Director of the Foundation. As Resource Planning Officer for the institution, the directorship of the Foundation was worked into my other assignments which included coordinating the campus grants office, teaching a freshman composition class and an American literature class, sponsoring the campus newspaper, and serving as a faculty assembly leader.

It was at a cocktail party one evening in October 1980 that I learned about CASE, and by November I was in Louisville at a CASE conference entitled "Raising Money Through an Institutionally Related Foundation," my first exposure to educational fund raising. I spent two days totally absorbed by concepts concerning the promotion of excellence, developing a case statement, building on strengths not on weaknesses, donors not being donors, but gift-givers, and the language of request boiling down to "would you consider a gift of . . .." I took these concepts and many others that I learned and applied them to establishing an Educational Foundation, Inc., at New River Community College.

CASE suggested that an institution get a commitment from its staff before attempting to get commitments from those the staff serves. The theory offered is that if you do not have believers inside the organization, you will have a difficult time convincing those outside that their money is well invested in the institution. We formed a Faculty-Staff Foundation Advisory Board which functions in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. It was this Board that solicitated support for the Foundation from faculty and staff. Data suggest that support from one-third of the faculty, who are, on the whole, decidedly underpaid, is considered good support. NRCC had that number immediately. Ultimately, 31 employees chose to become charter members, making gifts or pledges of at least $1,000 to the Foundation. All totalled, 70% of the faculty made a commitment to our effort through a gift. We concluded that the staff believed in the college and its role in the community.

One of the most important decisions the Board made during the year was to raise the level of visibility of the college within the community. Before we could ask for support from people in the community who were in positions to give us large sums, they needed to know why they should support us. We began our "Building Bridges" campaign. First, we asked one of the ten most powerful corporate executives in the United States to be our graduation speaker. To a crowd numbering more than 1,000 in rural Southwest Virginia, he hailed the alliance between industry and the community college and the importance industry places on the college training for the world of work.

We developed a list of potential donors and heading that list were all the industries we had served during the last few years. Historically, most had been exceedingly complimentary, but few had gone beyond saying thank you for all the training services we had performed. We invited them for breakfast where we showed them a 12-minute, fast-moving slide-tape production about the

numerous contributions the college has made to their company and to them personally. Within an hour they saw the production and heard testimonials from area leaders who are advocates of the college. The college president ended the presentation by introducing the Foundation to those in attendance. These breakfasts not only brought us new training jobs, but also additional goodwill and financial support.

Continuing the high visibility campaign, the director of the Foundation made numerous speeches in the area to such groups as the Rotary Club and a United Methodist men's morning prayer group, informing them of the contributions the college makes to the region and about the recent organization of the Foundation.

A letter was sent to area leaders and influential citizens asking them to help NRCC by writing letters of endorsement which might be used in promotional materials or sent to area legislators. The response was overwhelming and heartening. We knew our services were appreciated, but the accolades encouraged us to push harder to establish a higher profile within the community. Area newspapers, too, were helpful in promoting the image. Good coverage was given because reporters were kept informed of each detail, and they, too, participated in the "Building Bridges" breakfasts.

In order not to offend the women of the community who were, for the most part, not invited to the breakfasts, the director held the first in a series of luncheons. The purpose of the luncheon was to have women of influence come to the campus so that they, too, could know of the good the college was and is performing. The first luncheon brought to the campus an executive of a local foundation who subsequently helped us apply for and receive funding from a private foundation for which she is a director.

The "Building Bridges" campaign laid the groundwork for our Charter Member Fund Drive which began September 1981, and continued through October 1982. Our goal was to raise $100,000 during that time. Anyone pledging or giving $1,000 or more was to have his or her name or the name of his or her organization inscribed on a bronze scroll to be permanently housed at the college.

In support of the drive the president began making one-on-one visits to those on his list of potential donors, asking them to consider becoming a charter member of the NRCC Educational Foundation. To say that attention to detail and participation by the college president is important to the growth of a Foundation is a gross understatement. The literature suggests that the success of an educational foundation rests with the college president, and it further suggests that fund raising will soon be a college president's most important duty. NRCC has been fortunate to have a president dedicated to promoting excellence at the institution, and he has led the Foundation with his enthusiasm, concern, support, and hard work.

Our kick-off for the Charter Member Fund Drive was a wine and cheese party sponsored by a local bank and "A Stroll Down Broadway," a musical review of Broadway featuring Miss Virginia 1981. The Sunday night performance was by-invitation-only and brought to the campus area elected officials, lawyers, physicians, and university professors, to name a few, at $10 a head. Aside from raising money for the Foundation, the event brought us several charter members and high visibility.

When our charter member drive began in September 1981, we had $6,000. When the drive ended in October 1982, there was close to $130,000 in liquid assets on the books and almost $300,000 in gifts other than cash. We celebrated reaching our goal by honoring charter members at a "Renaissance Garden

Ball" which was so successful that the Board of Directors has made it an annual affair.

This month the NRCC Educational Foundation, Inc., is two years old. Our Foundation office is still sorely understaffed with only a part-time director and part-time secretary; however, if educational foundations are to function on community college campuses, many will have to operate, at least in the beginning, this way. Projects we are involved in today include updating and illustrating our case statement, printing an annual report, initiating a matching gift fund drive, and developing corporate and foundation proposals in addition to implementing an annual fund drive. We look forward to a continued alliance with area industry and business as their training needs grow and our need for their support continues.

We feel we have been successful, and we anticipate significant growth. As with many institutions of higher learning, NRCC has recently undergone a reorganization of the management team. As a part of that reorganization, I will become Director of College Relations, a new position in the Virginia Community College System, on July 1. A fundamental part of this new responsibility includes the directorship of the Educational Foundation, Inc. The Virginia Secretary of Education has mandated the generating of external funding sources as integral to institutional development, and as of July, the Director of College Relations will be in a position to vigorously pursue private sector funding.

At New River Community College we are committed to what we are doing. We believe that our institution does make a difference in the lives of those in the communities we serve, and we want the institution to grow so that we may serve needs that never cease to grow.

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